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WAR ECONOMIES

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A NON-GREASY LUBRICANT SUBSTITUTE FOR VASELINE

Vaseline has been found to be very destructive to rubber gloves; when frequently used upon them, the deterioration of the rubber is markedly increased causing at first a softening and thinning of the material, followed later by a hardening and cracking along the folds and seams. The life of the rubber glove when used for gynecological examinations, is of such short duration that surgeons have for many years endeavored to obtain a non-greasy lubricant. This difficulty has been met, in a way, by certain drug firms; there are several products on the market which are free from grease, but the cost of such lubricants is so great, twenty-five to thirty cents a tube, as to make their use in small hospitals almost prohibitive.

However, a very satisfactory preparation can be made at a small cost by using as a base, the mucilage obtained from certain vegetable drugs such as quince seed, tragacanth, or Irish moss. The latter is undoubtedly the most satisfactory as it is rich in mucilage, inexpensive, comparatively free from undesirable ingredients, and possesses very good lubricant properties, at the same time being harmless to the rubber, tending to preserve it and keep it soft and pliable.

The following has proved to be a good working formula:

Distilled water	1000 mils.
Irish moss	30 gm.

Wash the moss with cold water. Place in a double boiler with the distilled water and heat for one-half hour. Remove and strain through muslin. Evaporate the strained liquid one-third and add one part of glycerine to each five parts of the liquid obtained. Lastly add sufficient phenol crystals to make the preparation one per cent phenol. If the cost of the phenol makes its use prohibitive it may be omitted, but the preparation should be carefully sterilized. This can be accomplished most conveniently in a steam sterilizer by fractional sterilization. The finished preparation is of proper consistency to be dispensed in collapsible tubes, though the ordinary ointment jars may be used if desired and are considerably cheaper, though less convenient.

By following the above formula, a preparation can be made at about one-sixth the market cost of the greaseless lubricants and at practically the same cost as vaseline.

At this time of great need for conservation of materials of all kinds, the potential conservation of this one almost indispensable article, rubber gloves, may well be considered. Hospitals not already using such a lubricant as described above, can very greatly aid in lessening the waste of rubber supplies by making such a change and they can, at the same time, very noticeably decrease their own expenses.

AN ECONOMICAL RUBBING LOTION

The following is a rubbing lotion found to be a satisfactory substitute for the alcohol rubbing lotion:

Gum tragacanth	5 gm.
Irish moss	15 gm.
Water	200 mils. (cc)

Boil ten minutes, cool, strain, and add tannic acid, q. s., to make one per cent strength.

WATER-PREPARED IODINE

Among the changes in the different formulas of the Ninth Revision of the United States Pharmacopoeia, the change in the preparation of tincture of iodine was noted with great appreciation by many pharmacists. The difficulty experienced in completely dissolving the potassium iodide when following the formula of the Eighth Revision, which called for the use of alcohol, only, as the solvent, has been eliminated by the substitution of a small amount of water. However, it has been found that even the small amount of water permitted, is objectionable in certain cases; for example, when used following the application of a benzine and iodine solution as in the preparation of the skin for surgical operations, blistering occurred, probably due to the slow evaporation of the solvent caused by the presence of the water.

It was at first explained that the tincture used was too strong, and dilutions were tried, but resulted in only slightly alleviating the trouble. Naturally, the apparently harmless change in the formula of the tincture caused us no constraint, but it was discovered later, through the coöperation of surgeons and nurses, who tried out preparations of the tinctures made according to the formulas of both the Eighth and the Ninth Revisions, that even with the most extreme care in drying the skin of the field of operation, after the application of the benzine and again after the application of the tincture of iodine, there was at least slight burning or blistering resulting from the use of the tincture containing the water, while with the usual care in drying the skin after the application of the preparations, no blistering resulted following the use of the tincture prepared without water.

Accordingly, all tincture of iodine prepared for surgical use is being made after the formula of the Eighth Revision of the United States Pharmacopoeia.